

Week Ending Friday, September 28, 2007

The President's Radio Address

September 22, 2007

Good morning. In just 8 days, the State Children's Health Insurance Program—or SCHIP—is set to expire. This important program helps children whose families cannot afford private health insurance, but who do not qualify for Medicaid to get the coverage they need. I strongly supported SCHIP as a Governor and have strongly supported it as President. My 2008 budget proposed to increase SCHIP funding by \$5 billion over 5 years, a 20-percent increase over current funding.

Instead of working with my administration to enact this funding increase for children's health, Democrats in Congress have decided to pass a bill they know will be vetoed. One of their leaders has even said such a veto would be "a political victory." As if this weren't irresponsible enough, Congress is waiting until the SCHIP program is just about to expire before passing a final bill. In other words, Members of Congress are risking health coverage for poor children purely to make a political point.

The proposal congressional leaders are pushing would raise taxes on working Americans and would raise spending by \$35 to \$50 billion. Their proposal would result in taking a program meant to help poor children and turning it into one that covers children in some households with incomes of up to \$83,000 a year. And their proposal would move millions of children who now have private health insurance into Government-run health care. Our goal should be to move children who have no health insurance to private coverage, not to move children who already have private health insurance to Government coverage.

My administration remains committed to working with Congress to pass a responsible SCHIP bill. In the meantime, I called this

week for Congress to make sure health insurance for poor children does not lapse. If they fail to do so, more than a million children could lose health coverage. Health coverage for these children should not be held hostage while political ads are being made and new polls are being taken. Congress must pass a clean, temporary extension of the current SCHIP program that I can sign by September 30th, the date the program expires.

In addition to extending the SCHIP program, Congress needs to focus on passing fundamental spending bills, especially the annual funding bill for the Department of Defense. Congress must also pass additional funding for our troops fighting the war on terror. We need these bills so we can get our men and women in uniform essential equipment, like additional armored fighting vehicles that are resistant to mines and ambushes.

The American people expect their elected leaders in Washington to work together by passing responsible bills in a timely manner. I am confident that with good will on both sides, Democrats and Republicans can do this. We can meet our obligations to help poor children get health coverage. We can meet our responsibilities to the men and women keeping our Nation safe. And we can do our duty to spend the taxpayers' money wisely.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on September 21 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 21 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to the Young Presidents' Organization

September 24, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. I've spoken to a lot of people in this room, but rarely have I spoken to a group of people who I can address, Mr. President, or Madam President. *[Laughter]* I thank you for joining us. I appreciate Jim Nussle joining us as well.

I look forward to having—giving you a few remarks on the budget. As business leaders, you know it's important to set priorities and make decisions in a timely way. That's what you do on a daily basis. If you were running a company whose lease was up for renewal in a few months, you'd ask the landlord to start negotiating prices and terms. You would anticipate the cancellation of the—or the renegotiation of the lease. You would ask for time to think about the best way forward, and you wouldn't be happy if the landlord waited until the night before your time was up and then dropped on your desk a 500-page lease that he expected you to sign. In the business world, that's called alienating your customers. *[Laughter]* In Washington, that's called the appropriations process. *[Laughter]*

The fiscal year ends in less than a week. Yet Congress has not sent a single appropriations bill to my desk. Not one. Instead, the congressional leaders may end up lumping all 12 outstanding appropriations bills into one massive, trillion-dollar piece of legislation later this year. This would make it easier for Members to sneak in all kinds of special projects, put in wasteful spending or porkbarrel that they are not willing to debate in the open.

If they think that by waiting until just before they leave for the year to send me a bill that is way over budget and thicker than a phonebook, if they think that's going to force me to sign it, it's not. This would be bad for our country; it would be harmful for our economy; and it would be unfair for the taxpayers.

This is an important time for our economy. For nearly 6 years, we've enjoyed uninterrupted economic growth. Since August 2003, the economy has added more than 8.2 million jobs. Productivity is growing, and that's

translating into larger paychecks for American workers. Unemployment is low; inflation is low; and opportunity abounds. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong.

You know, this economic vitality just didn't happen—in other words, it's—I think it's the result of hard work and people dreaming big dreams and working hard to fulfill them. I also believe it's the result of pro-growth economic policies. And the job in Washington is to keep the environment sound for investment and for growth.

And so with that in mind, last February, I submitted a budget to Congress that fully funds our priorities, yet holds the growth of nonsecurity discretionary spending to less than inflation; it puts us on the path to budget surplus by 2012; and it does all this without raising taxes. In other words, we can meet priorities, and we can do so without raising taxes. I think raising taxes would be bad for the economy and bad for the working people.

Unfortunately, the Democratic majority in Congress has chosen a different path. The plan they have put forward includes an increase in discretionary spending that is nearly \$22 billion more than my budget request. Some in Congress will tell you that \$22 billion is not a lot of money. As business leaders, you know better. As a matter of fact, \$22 billion is larger than the annual revenues of most Fortune 500 companies. And the \$22 billion is only for the first year. With every passing year, the number gets bigger and bigger, and so over the next 5 years, the increase in Federal spending would add up to \$205 billion. And the only way to pay for such a large spending increase is to raise taxes on the American people.

So it's no surprise that the same Members of Congress who are planning the big increase in Federal spending are also planning the largest tax increase in American history. At a time when families are working hard to pay their mortgages or pay for their children going to college, now is not the time to be taking money out of their pocket.

The Founders understood that there would be times when the President and the Congress would have different views about spending and taxes, and so they gave the executive and legislative branches different powers. Congress has the power of the purse,